



PUBLIC HEALTH NOTICE

OUTBREAK OF SALMONELLA INFECTIONS LINKED TO POULTRY, INCLUDING FROZEN RAW BREADED CHICKEN PRODUCTS

This notice has been updated to advise Canadians who handle, prepare and consume poultry, including frozen raw breaded chicken products, of the increased risk to their health if proper safe food handling practices are not followed. This update also includes an additional 9 cases of illness that have been identified in the outbreak. There are now 68 Salmonella infections involved in the ongoing outbreak investigation.

Why you should take note?

The Public Health Agency of Canada is collaborating with provincial and territorial public health partners, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency and Health Canada to investigate an outbreak of Salmonella Enteritidis infections in nine provincial and territorial jurisdictions with cases of human illness linked to poultry, including frozen raw breaded chicken products.

Based on the investigation evidence to date, poultry, including frozen breaded chicken products containing raw poultry, pose an increased health risk to individuals who handle, prepare or consume these types of foods. The Public Health Agency of Canada advises Canadians to follow proper food safety practices when handling, preparing or consuming any type of poultry, including frozen raw breaded chicken products such as chicken burgers, nuggets, and strips.

As part of this outbreak investigation, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency issued a food recall warning on June 2, 2018 for the following product:

No Name brand Chicken Burgers (1kg), with a best before date of February 6, 2019. The product was distributed nationally.

Canadians are advised not to consume the recalled product, and retailers and restaurants are advised to not serve the recalled product.

Although Salmonella is commonly found in raw chicken and frozen raw breaded chicken products, this outbreak is a reminder that Salmonella can be present in poultry and various brands of frozen raw breaded chicken products.

Illnesses can be avoided by following cooking instructions carefully and verifying the internal temperature after cooking, as recommended, before consuming these products. Frozen raw breaded chicken products and raw poultry pieces must be cooked to an internal temperature of at least 74°C (165°F) to ensure that they are safe to eat. Whole poultry must be cooked to an internal temperature of at least 82°C (180°F).

Investigation Summary

Currently, there are 68 cases of Salmonella Enteritidis illness in nine jurisdictions: British Columbia (8), Alberta (9), Manitoba (9), Ontario (15), Quebec (23), New Brunswick (1), Nova Scotia (1), Newfoundland and Labrador (1), and the Northwest Territories (1). Fifteen people have been hospitalized. No

deaths have been reported. Individuals became sick between March and May 2018. The average age of cases is 35 years, with ages ranging from 1 to 85 years. The majority of cases (56%) are male.

Based on the investigation findings to date, exposure to poultry, including frozen raw breaded chicken products, has been identified as a source of illness. Several of the ill individuals involved in the outbreak reported having eaten No Name brand chicken burgers before their illness occurred. A food sample of No Name brand Chicken Burgers (1kg), with a best before date of February 6, 2019, tested positive for Salmonella Enteritidis. The positive food sample had the same genetic fingerprint (using whole genome sequencing) as cases of human illness reported in this outbreak. As part of the food safety investigation, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency issued a food recall warning for the contaminated product. The CFIA is working with industry to ensure that this product is removed from the retail market. The investigation is ongoing, and it is possible that more products linked to the outbreak investigation will be identified. The public health notice will be updated as the investigation evolves.

Who is most at risk?

Anyone can become sick with a Salmonella infection, but infants, children, seniors and those with weakened immune systems are at higher risk of serious illness because their immune systems are more fragile.

Most people who become ill from a Salmonella infection will recover fully after a few days. It is possible for some people to be infected with the bacteria and not get sick or show any symptoms, but to still be able to spread the infection to others.

What you should do to protect your health?

Check to see whether you have the recalled frozen raw breaded chicken product in your home or place of business. If you do:

Do not use or eat the recalled product. Secure the recalled product in a plastic bag and throw it out or return it to the store where it was purchased.

If you do not have the original packaging of a frozen raw breaded chicken product and you are unsure of whether it is included in the food recall warnings, throw it out just to be safe.

Wash your hands with soap and warm water immediately following any contact with a recalled product.

Beyond recalled food items, frozen raw breaded chicken products may appear to be pre-cooked or browned, but they may contain raw chicken and should be handled and prepared no differently from other raw poultry products.

If you are preparing breaded chicken products, such as nuggets, strips or burgers, the following precautions should be taken to protect your health:

Do not eat raw or under-cooked frozen breaded chicken products. Cook all frozen breaded chicken products to an internal temperature of at least 74°C (165°F) to ensure that they are safe to eat. Use a digital food thermometer to verify the temperature. Insert the digital food thermometer through the side of the product, all the way to the middle. Oven-safe meat thermometers that are designed for testing whole poultry and roasts during cooking are not suitable for testing nuggets, strips or burgers.

Microwave cooking of frozen raw breaded poultry products, including chicken nuggets, strips or burgers, is not recommended because of the possibility of uneven heating.

Always follow the cooking instructions on the package, including for products labelled Uncooked, Cook and Serve, Ready to Cook, and Oven Ready.

Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and warm water before and after handling frozen raw breaded chicken products.

Use a separate plate, cutting board and utensils when handling frozen raw breaded chicken products to prevent the spread of harmful bacteria.

Do not re-use plates, cutting boards or utensils that have come in contact with frozen raw breaded chicken products to serve the cooked product unless they have been thoroughly washed.

Foods carrying Salmonella may look, smell and taste normal, so it's important to follow our safe food-handling tips for buying, chilling, thawing, cleaning, cooking, and storing any poultry products:

Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and warm water before and after handling all types of raw poultry.

Always follow the cooking instructions provided on the package. Cook poultry to a safe internal temperature that has been checked using a digital thermometer. Raw poultry pieces should be cooked to an internal temperature of 74°C (165°F). Whole poultry should be cooked to an internal temperature of 82°C (180°F).

Keep raw poultry away from other food while shopping, storing, repackaging, cooking and serving foods.

Never rinse poultry before using it because the bacteria can spread everywhere the water splashes, creating more of a hazard.

Use warm, soapy water to clean knives, cutting boards, utensils, your hands, and any surfaces that have come in contact with food, especially meat, poultry and fish.

If you have been diagnosed with a Salmonella infection or any other gastrointestinal illness, do not cook food for other people.

Eggs and egg-based foods should be fully cooked to ensure that they are safe to eat.

For more information, read our poultry safety fact sheet.

What are the symptoms?

Symptoms of a Salmonella infection, called salmonellosis, typically start 6 to 72 hours after exposure to Salmonella bacteria from an infected animal or contaminated product.

Symptoms include:

- fever
- chills
- diarrhea
- abdominal cramps
- headache
- nausea
- vomiting

These symptoms usually last for four to seven days. In healthy people, salmonellosis often clears up without treatment. In some cases, severe illness and hospitalization may

occur. People who are infected with Salmonella bacteria can be infectious from several days to several weeks. People who experience symptoms, or who have underlying medical conditions, should contact their health care provider if they suspect they have a Salmonella infection.

What is the Government of Canada doing?

The Government of Canada is committed to food safety. The Public Health Agency of Canada leads the human health investigation into an outbreak and is in regular contact with its federal, provincial and territorial partners to monitor

the situation and to collaborate on steps to address the outbreak.

Health Canada provides food-related health risk assessments to determine whether the presence of a certain substance or microorganism poses a health risk to consumers.

The Canadian Food Inspection Agency conducts food safety investigations into the possible food source of an outbreak.

The Government of Canada will continue to update Canadians as new information related to this investigation becomes available.

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